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White. Address at the consecration of
Harmony Grove Cemetery. 1840

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ADDRESS

AT THE CONSECRATION OF

HARMONY GROVE CEMETERY.

BY

D. A. WHITE



AN
ADDRESS,
DELIVERED
AT THE CONSECRATION
OF THE
HARMONY GROVE CEMETERY,
IN SALEM, JUNE 14, 1840.

BY
DANIEL APPLETON WHITE.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

SALEM:
PRINTED AT THE GAZETTE PRESS.
1840.

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Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, appearing as "10/10/87" and "10/10/87".

W

SALEM, JUNE 15, 1840.

HON. DANIEL A. WHITE:

SIR,

I am directed by the Trustees of the Harmony Grove Cemetery, to express the obligations under which they feel themselves to you, for the very excellent Address delivered at the Consecration of the Grounds, and with this return of thanks for the same, to request of you a Copy for the Press.

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH S. CABOT,

President of the Board of Trustees.

SALEM, JUNE 16, 1840.

SIR,

I thank you and the Trustees of the Harmony Grove Cemetery for your kind expressions of satisfaction with the Address, delivered at the Consecration of the Grounds. Nothing could have been more unexpected, than the call upon me to deliver this Address; and I regret that the circumstances under which it was written prevented a more thorough consideration of the subject. Yet the motives, which induced me to comply with the request of the Trustees to deliver it, forbid my withholding the manuscript from their disposal. I submit it to them as it was prepared, containing several passages, which, from want of time, were omitted in the delivery.

With great respect and regard,

Your obedient servant,

D. A. WHITE.

JOSEPH S. CABOT, Esq.

President of the Board of Trustees.

ADDRESS.

It was with unfeigned reluctance, my friends, as some of you well know, that I accepted the honor of taking the part assigned to me on this occasion, not from any want of interest in the noble object which has called us together, but because I felt too deeply interested in its success to be satisfied with anything which I could in this way do to promote it. Yet, if others better qualified for the task would not be persuaded to undertake it, I could not persist in refusing the little service which it might be in my power to render, and which was claimed of me by those, who, from their own exertions in this cause, had a right to command it. You will expect from me nothing more than a few plain and sober thoughts, the design of which will be to illustrate the importance of the object before us, and to commend it, if possible, still more to your affections and your patronage.

We must all feel under obligations to those of our friends, whose enlightened taste and public spirit peculiarly qualified them for the task of selecting and

preparing these grounds for a cemetery; and I am sure that I do but echo the common voice of grateful acknowledgement, when I tender to them our united and hearty thanks for their judicious and successful exertions. An object of incalculable importance to our city and community, and one which for some time has been anxiously desired, has thus been happily attained.

We are now assembled, my friends, to consecrate this most valuable possession of a burying place, to the great and holy purpose for which it is designed. It is indeed a lovely spot, already consecrated in our affections, and now to be endeared by more hallowed associations. HARMONY GROVE! do we not at once feel the beauty and appropriateness of this appellation? Its natural conformation and diversified scenery are not more in harmony with its destined purposes, than are our views and feelings in consecrating it to them. Whatever diversities of sentiment and interest may excite us elsewhere, they follow us not to this sacred and beautiful retreat. Here all is serenity, peace, and harmony. It is a delightful privilege to meet here in the spirit which the place inspires, and engage in a service which unites all hearts and interests our deepest affections.

We are strangers and sojourners on the earth, as were all our fathers, and our final resting place here is of deep and universal concern. The feelings most intimately connected with our subject are founded in our nature, and are strengthened and elevated by Christianity. Though, when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, yet the dis-

position of our mortal remains on earth is not a matter of indifference. On the contrary, it acquires an unspeakable interest from the sublime truth of Christianity, that this mortal will put on immortality. A feeling of reverence and sympathy for the dead is natural to man, how much more so to the Christian? Departed friends are removed from our sight, but they exist to our affections, they are present to our thoughts and meditations, and we hold a spiritual communion with them which is full of delight. Thus we live with the dead not less than with the living. Our intercourse with them is not wholly cut off at the grave, though there we bid adieu to all of them that was mortal, and consequently there cluster our most tender associations connected with them; there are awakened our fondest recollections; and often, like the affectionate sister of Lazarus, we go to the grave to weep there. How important then it is to our best feelings, that the mortal remains of dear relatives and friends should repose not in a place which it is painful to revisit, but in some rural retreat, or sequestered vale, where the troubled spirit may be tranquilized by the peaceful influences of nature, and where grief may derive a solace from indulging her tears of affection.

Such is always the natural desire of the human heart uninfluenced by custom or prejudice. Natural sentiment and feeling delight to associate with the memory of loved friends the retirement and beautiful scenery of nature, and to cover their graves with verdure, and adorn them with garlands and flowers. The Roman poet gives expression to this

natural sentiment and feeling in allusion to the young Marcellus :

“ Bring fragrant flowers, the whitest lilies bring,
With all the purple beauties of the spring;
These gifts at least, these honors I'll bestow
On the dear youth, to please his shade below.”

Such is the genuine language of affection among all nations. You find the expression of it among the ancient Jews, Greeks and Romans; among the Turks, the Poles, the Swiss, as well as in many parts of England, France, and our own country; facts, too well known to need a particular description, and they all flow from a deep and tender feeling of sympathy for the dead, indicating that we think them still conscious of the honors paid to their remains.

These and all similar facts show how natural is the feeling which gives us such an interest in the dead. Wherever the spiritual part of our nature is at all in action, it works out for itself the sentiment of immortality, or the sentiment that death is only another form of life, and that the dead are living. But all associations connected with friends gather round the living form. The living form becomes inseparable from our ideas and recollections of them, and as man, without Christianity, never did, and probably never could attain for himself the notion of a wholly spiritual existence, it was a matter of necessary consequence that the interest which follows the dead should connect itself with the body, resolving itself into a sympathy with the body and its fortunes, simply because man was unable to imagine

the condition, pursuits and relations of the soul in the unseen and eternal world.

The ancient Gentile nations, as is well known, attached great importance to sepulture. Their monuments to the dead were to be seen by the way side, to inspire an interest in the traveller; thus expressing sympathy for the dead, and at the same time demanding and awakening it. The supposed forlorn condition of the unburied in the regions below may be regarded as only a manifestation of this feeling, intimating not that the dead were punished for what they could not avoid, but that the living should feel the importance of paying profound respect to the dead; the importance, in other words, of cherishing those feelings of our nature, which were the most sacred and nearest the religious of all which could enter the Gentile heart. Their gods inspired no veneration, and, since their religious feelings were deprived of the natural channel, this seems to have been the direction in which they flowed. With the Hebrew patriarchs, who were acquainted with the true God, this feeling for the dead took its right place in the mind; it blended itself gracefully with the high religious feelings; and therefore their bearing in reference to the dead is our appropriate example, all their feeling on the subject being essentially the same with the Christian. We go to them to learn what is due to the dead, and the lesson we receive is solemn and striking in the highest degree.

The various modes of sepulture, which have prevailed in the world, all serve to illustrate this deep feeling for the dead. Embalming the body, as practised by the Egyptians and others, evidently sprung

from this feeling; as did also the very opposite mode of burning the body and enshrining the ashes, which, though always abhorrent to the feelings of Christians, prevailed still more extensively than embalming, and was designed more securely to protect the remains of the dead from violation. The most simple and natural manner of disposing of the human body after death is, doubtless, by burial in the earth. Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, is the voice of nature as well as of God. This mode, therefore, best accords with our unprejudiced feelings on the subject. This, too, the Roman orator and philosopher, in his Book of Laws, represents as the most ancient mode of sepulture, adding the beautiful thought, that by it we commit the dead to the protection of a mother. The great Cyrus, as we read in the *Cyropædia*, appears to have felt a similar sentiment, when, just before his death, he charged his children not to enshrine his body in gold or silver, or any thing else, but to restore it to the earth; for what, said he, can be happier, than to mingle with the earth, which produces all things excellent and good; and as I have always desired to be a benefactor of mankind, so I would now be united with that which is beneficial to men. A sentiment, which beautifully illustrates the power of association upon a good mind in relation to this subject, and justly rebukes the heartlessness of those Cynics, whether of ancient or modern times, who have no sympathy with the common solicitude for a decent burial of the dead.

The original occupants of the soil whereon we stand, deserve a respectful notice in illustration

of the present topic. Among their noblest traits, was a solemn and tender feeling for their dead. The description of an Indian funeral, which took place in this very vicinity, has come down to us from the pen of the curious Dunton, who witnessed it, on his way from Ipswich in 1686, and it strikingly illustrates this feeling, while it shows also their decent mode of burial. "When the mourners came to the grave," says this traveller, "they laid the body by the grave's mouth, and then all the Indians sat down and lamented; and I observed tears to run down the cheeks of the oldest among them, as well as from little children."*

One of the pilgrim fathers of Plymouth, supposed to be Gov. Winslow, in his *Journal of a Plantation*, describes a rural cemetery of the Indians, which might well be imitated by many of their civilized successors. "We followed," says the author, "a great way into the woods. Anon, we found a burying place, one part whereof was encompassed with a large palisado, like a churchyard, with young spires four or five yards long, set as close one by another as they could, two or three feet in the ground. Within, it was full of graves, some bigger and some less. Some were also paled about, and others had like an Indian house made over them, but not matted. Without the palisado, were graves also, but not so costly."† In one other respect, the Indian practice might instruct some of the proudest of their civilized successors. They wisely placed their cemeteries at a suitable distance from their villages.

But it is in the history of the patriarchs, as already intimated, that we may expect to find the

* *Life and Errors*, I, 135. † 8 *Mass Hist. Collections*, 218.

clearest illustration of our subject, as well as the purest model for our direction in the sacred duty which we owe to the dead. Whose heart has not been moved by the touching simplicity and pathos of the account, given in the Scriptures, of the manner in which the patriarchs attended to the holy rites of sepulture? And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake to the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. The generous sons of Heth replied, thou art a mighty prince among us, in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead. But nay, said Abraham, entreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah for as much money as it is worth. Ephron answered, the cave I give thee, and the field I give thee; bury thy dead. Abraham replied, but if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me, I will give thee money for the field; take it from me, and I will bury my dead there. And he weighed unto Ephron the silver, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Machpelah, and the cave that was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure to Abraham for a possession of a burying place. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah.

Henceforth the field of Machpelah was consecrated ground, gathering around it the holiest associations and attachments of the Hebrew race.

Bury me not in Egypt, said Jacob to Joseph, bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought of Ephron for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

And Joseph went up to bury his father, and there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, a very great company : thus fulfilling his father's wishes in a spirit of solemn grandeur, worthy of his princely and magnanimous ancestor.

You may trace the funeral customs of all the most learned and polished nations of antiquity, and survey the stupendous pyramids of Egypt, the gorgeous tombs of Greece, and the splendid sepulchral monuments of Rome, yet you will find nothing more apposite to our present purpose, or more worthy of our affectionate veneration, than the touching memorials of these noble-hearted patriarchs of Judea. Nor would the result be different, were you to pursue the inquiry through the various nations of modern Europe, and explore all their boasted wonders of monumental art and natural scenery, forgetting not the time-honored glories of Westminster Abbey, in England, or the enchanting beauties of nature and of art, which have given celebrity to the Pere la Chaise of France. And why is it so? Simply because these patriarchal memorials not only breathe the sentiment of immortality and are true to nature, but are full of heart. The heart is there in all its simplicity and purity, in all its freshness and strength, and it meets from every human heart a warm response.

Nor did this magnanimous spirit die with the patriarchs; it descended with their memory and became a striking characteristic of the Hebrew nation. It formed the soul of their poetry, their eloquence, and their whole literature. It appeared in the ardor of their friendships, in the fervor of their devotions, and in their undying attachment to their country and its institutions. But no where did it appear in a more attractive form, than in their tender and holy sympathy for the dead. With them, death was a sleep, the grave a house, a home; and to die was to be gathered to their people, to sleep with their fathers. A pious reverence was felt for their fathers' sepulchres, with an insuperable repugnance to the thought of being separated from them in death. The fervid patriot Nehemiah bewailed the desolation of his country, most of all, because the place of his fathers' sepulchres was laid waste; and the good old Barzillai, when importuned by his king to go with him to Jerusalem, prayed to be excused, that he might die in his own city, and be buried by the grave of his father and of his mother.

In the example of such a people we might expect to find something useful and applicable in the practical consideration of the subject before us; and so we do, particularly in reference to the location and protection of their cemeteries. As the law imposed no restriction in these matters, individuals erected sepulchres upon their own grounds wherever they pleased, in gardens, by the wayside, in fields, or on mountains; but it was an almost invariable usage with them to locate their cemeteries, whether public or private, without their cities. It is said, indeed,

by Jewish writers, that the sepulchre of King David and two others, in the city of Jerusalem, formed the only exception to this rule.

We have seen with what regard to natural situation and scenery the father of their nation selected the burying place for his family and descendants, and with what resolution and liberality of spirit he persisted in the accomplishment of his purpose. We cannot doubt that the spot thus selected was guarded from every species of desecration, and so treated, in all respects, as to increase the feeling of reverence which its character inspired. Such, we are assured, was the customary regard paid to their cemeteries by succeeding generations of the Hebrew people. No improper intrusions upon the grounds of a cemetery were permitted; such as the grazing of cattle, or the gathering of wood growing there; and no public road or aqueduct was allowed to pass through them. It was also inculcated as a sacred rule, not to disturb the repose of a grave by burying again in it, even after many years.

These cemetery grounds are sometimes represented as of considerable extent, affording inclosures for particular families, ascertained and beautified according to the taste of the respective proprietors, the intermediate space being planted with flowers, or bordered round with stone. The Jews called their sepulchres "the house of the living," thereby intimating their firm belief in the resurrection of the body; and it was this, perhaps, as remarked by a late writer, which made them take pleasure in strewing the graves of departed relatives with green

leaves, flowers, branches of palm and myrtle, and surrounding them with shrubs and flowers.*

The very important rule, that cemeteries should never be placed within a city, or among a dense population, was regarded, in common with the Jews, by all the most distinguished nations of antiquity. In Rome, it was among the laws of the Twelve Tables. It was observed also by the Christians till the age of Constantine, who is said to have been the first person who ordered his sepulchre to be erected in a church. His example, together with the practice of building churches over the sepulchres of holy martyrs, or seeking to place their relics under a new church, for its greater sanctity, and the belief that it was a privilege to be buried near a saint, served to make it a general custom to deposite the dead in churches.

This custom extended to England, where burying in churches, and in places adjoining to them, were practices familiar to the fathers of New England, before their settlement in this country. For the former of these practices they could have had no predilection, but they were probably influenced by the latter in so generally laying out their burial grounds near to their houses of public worship. Yet, considering their intimate knowledge of the Bible, and their profound respect for the laws and institutions of the ancient people of God, it is reasonable to suppose that they were more indebted to this source than to any other, for their sentiments and feelings respecting the dead, and for their manner of sepulture.

Among christians we should expect to find, as we

* Brown's Jewish Antiq. v. 3. 256. 269.

do, the sentiment of immortality deeper and stronger than before; and it manifests itself, in relation to this subject, in that lion-like feeling which guards the sanctity of the grave; a feeling, rough and indiscriminate, but showing by its overwhelming energy, how deep is the conviction from which it springs.

It is natural to ask, why does not this feeling induce us to take more care of the resting places of the dead? To this it might be answered, that taste may be wanting, where feeling is strong. The feeling lays hold on circumstances which seem more important, and passes by mere ornament and beauty as unimportant things. The country churchyard, with its leaning stones and its broken walls, given over to desolation, may show no want of sympathy for the dead, but only that the sympathy expresses itself in another way; as there is a sort of kindness to the living, which would not show itself in delicate attentions and graceful courtesies, but would manifest itself in the more substantial way of guarding their rights, and defending them from wanton wrongs. Yet this feeling, though it thinks not of delicate attentions to the dead, is always ready to welcome them when proposed. It sees their appropriateness at once; and those who have the true taste on this subject always find it easy to awaken it in others. The taste so laudably manifested, many years since, by the city of New Haven, in adorning their public cemetery, was applauded and had its influence elsewhere. This influence, as I happened to know, reached the beautiful town of Newburyport, and served to give to their new burial ground its graceful and attractive appearance. Not many, perhaps,

would have thought even of the peerless Mount Auburn, but all were struck with it, when once suggested. The plan has found an universal welcome, and is gradually extending itself through the country. These examples have thus been the means of improving the condition of many of our country churchyards; yet much remains to be performed by the hand of taste, before they will generally exhibit the rural beauty and attraction of which they are susceptible.

In consequence of the general practice, in New England, of locating burial grounds near to the houses of public worship, all our cities and populous towns have grown up around them. Their existence at present, therefore, among a dense population, is no cause of reproach to the fathers, nor indeed to the sons, if they use the means in their power to remedy the evil or prevent its extension. In all our country villages, these sacred places must be objects of increasing interest, and of an improving taste. It has always appeared to me that they possess a moral attraction, which cannot fail to secure for them an adequate protection. The first line of poetry which I recollect to have read, was this, "An honest man's the noblest work of God,"—inscribed upon the grave-stone of a venerated physician of my native place; and it made a deeper impression than any whole system of moral philosophy since read.

If I might be allowed another personal allusion, I would refer to the burial ground of the ancient and pleasant town of Haverhill, as possessing a high degree of moral interest, and admitting of almost any

degree of rural ornament. It is situated at a suitable distance from the centre of the village, on a beautiful eminence rising from the banks of the Merrimack. Among its time-worn monuments may be traced, or could have been recently, memorials of the same family, for six or seven successive generations from the settlement of the town.* And I can scarcely imagine a purer satisfaction, or a more fruitful contemplation, than I have there enjoyed in tracing out such memorials, and thus forming a very interesting ancestral acquaintance.

“Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree’s shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

Burying in the vaults of churches is now almost everywhere discountenanced as injurious to health, though in some places still practised; and the per-

* Another fact connected with a branch of the family alluded to deserves, from its singularity, a slight antiquarian notice, which may be allowed here. A farm adjoining this burial ground, near which was the first settlement as well as the first meeting house, has regularly descended, through the male line, from an original grantee of the Indians to the *eighth* generation, and now belongs to a minor of the same name with the first proprietor.

WILLIAM WHITE, with his wife Mary, having been one of the first settlers of Ipswich, and also of Newbury, finally settled at Haverhill in 1641, and was among the grantees of the Indian deed conveying to the “inhabitants of Pentucket,” for “three pounds and ten shillings,” fourteen miles in length and six in breadth on Merrimack River; which deed is still in existence, witnessed by him and in his hand writing. His only son JOHN, married to Hannah French, at Salem, Nov. 25, 1662, left an only son JOHN; who, married to Lydia, daughter of John Gilman of Exeter, Oct. 26, 1687, had a numerous family, but left this farm to his eldest son WILLIAM; who, married to Sarah, daughter of Samuel Phillips of Salem, (a grandson of Rev. George Phillips and father of Rev. Samuel P. of Andover,) June 12, 1716, left the farm to his second son SAMUEL; who left it to his only son SAMUEL; who left it to his only son WILLIAM; who recently died, leaving it to his son WILLIAM.

Such a regular descent of lands, in the male line, for so many generations, beginning with a grantee of the Aborigines, is perhaps without a parallel in the country.

suasion that cemeteries should never be established within populous towns or cities is constantly gaining ground, and will not fail to become universal. The prevalence of these opinions among ourselves renders it unnecessary for me to direct your attention to those gloomy sepulchral vaults, which cannot be opened to the light of day without some danger, nor always approached by the afflicted without a shock to their sensibilities. Gladly we turn from such topics to contemplate the influences of that more simple and natural mode of sepulture which is dictated by true feeling, whether for the dead or for the living, and to consider particularly the benefits which may be expected from the cemetery now to be consecrated.

The condition of the public burial grounds in Salem being such as to require the procurement of others, the city authorities readily united in pursuit of the present object with those private gentlemen, whose views had long been directed to it. Public sentiment and feeling, as well as the example of other cities, forbade the establishment of a cemetery in the midst of our city population, and created a strong desire that the best rural situation in our neighborhood might be obtained for this purpose. Let us congratulate ourselves, my friends, nay, let us bless God, that the object is now completely accomplished, that the very spot, of all others best suited for this noble purpose, the spot upon which all eyes and all hearts have been fixed, is made sure to us for a possession of a burying place, with all the trees that are in the field, that are in the borders round about.

When, some few years since, my eyes for the first

time rested upon the charming scene here presented, I was surprised and delighted to find a situation so near and so perfectly formed by nature for a rural cemetery. But I was told, at the time, that little hope could be indulged of obtaining it from the various proprietors, who held it by hereditary descent, among whom were some of the Society of Friends who might not feel a sympathy in the object contemplated. To their honor, however, be it said, to the honor of human nature, indeed, which readily yields to the influence of so beneficent an object, these apprehensions were wholly groundless, and we have none but grateful recollections associated with the late proprietors of Harmony Grove. Thanks to a kind and over-ruling Providence! which, through their peaceful possession, has preserved it to us in its original beauty and freshness. It comes to us with the same bold and attractive features, the same diversified and delightful aspect, and the same pure character, which it received from the hand of nature. No footsteps of vice or folly can be traced here; nothing of desecration has ever intruded upon this lovely spot. Let us then welcome it to our affections, as a gift from the God of nature, and let us so appreciate and so improve it, as to evince our fervent gratitude for the precious gift.

The lovers of nature had long been familiar with this rural retreat, attracted not only by the beauty of its scenery, but by the early flowering plants, which abound here in great variety, and by the harmony of the feathered songsters, which have ever delighted to collect here and to enliven with their notes the beautiful grove which owes to them its

name. This portion of our grounds is finely wooded, presenting also an interesting variety of trees in proportion to their number. To some of you it may have been a subject of regret, that the fields, which have been added to complete the necessary extent of grounds, are not equally adorned with trees. But, I think, we must all be satisfied with their present condition, when we consider the opportunity thus afforded for introducing improvements in the order and kind of trees and shrubs. We may confidently trust to the correct judgment and taste of our friends who superintend these improvements, that every thing in their power will be done to enrich and adorn these fields with appropriate plants and foliage. It is their intention to introduce here, as far as may be practicable, every variety of American forest tree and shrubbery, forming a complete *Arboretum Americanum*, delightful to the lover of nature, and useful in a high degree to the student of natural history. This object alone, together with the beautiful promenades and healthful influences attending it, affording exhilarating exercise and the purest enjoyment, is of infinitely more value than its whole cost, to the people of our city and community who appreciate the gratifications of taste and the blessings of health. How incalculable then is the value of these grounds, when, in addition to all other advantages, we take into view the great and holy purpose to which they are now to be consecrated, and for which they are so admirably adapted.

In casting our eyes around us, we are at once struck with the bold, yet beautifully variegated scenery of the place, presenting, at a single glance, ev-

ery desirable structure and modification of grounds; high lands and low lands, the rocky cliff, the woody knoll and the sheltered valley, with shady groves, and sunny slopes, and verdant plains, all graced by the gently winding stream beneath, which flows so softly by, that it seems to linger as if to enjoy the scene. Ascending the summit, our eyes open upon an extensive and richly diversified landscape, around the whole horizon, embracing delightful views of our neighboring villages of Danvers and Beverly, and, in the wide range between them, cultivated hills and fruitful orchards, with handsome edifices interspersed half buried in the foliage. In an opposite direction, rise before our view the spires and towers of our city of peace, with noble prospects of the harbor and of the ocean. Before quitting the beautifully varied landscape, our eyes will not fail to be arrested by that ancient "garden of graves" on the opposite margin of the river, where sleep the forefathers of some of our worthy associates;—an object, always beheld from these groves with solemn emotions, and now to mingle its holiest influences with all that is hallowed here.

But I would not undertake to describe to you, my friends, what you behold in such vivid perfection, and what gives increased delight every time your eyes open upon the beautiful and picturesque scene. I would merely allude to some of the more prominent features and attributes of this fascinating retreat, which so pre-eminently qualify it for the uses of a rural cemetery. Its irregularities and varieties, affording a thousand interesting traits and local beauties, and always presenting something new in

aspect or association, are among its leading charms. In such a region, the heart is never at a loss to find what is suited to inspire and fix its deep and tender sympathies, as well as to excite delighted emotions. Our local affections, like the vine, seek something to cling to and twine about in order to become strongly attached. Think you that the captive children of Judea would have mourned for their country with such undying love and tenderness, had not that country attached them by its varied and beautiful mountains, as well as its luxuriant vales? Think you that the Swiss patriot would cling to his native land with such ardor of soul, were its sublime mountainous scenery a level plain?

“ Dear is that hill which lifts him to the storm.”

So too, the striking varieties of land and scenery presented by these lofty summits and lowly vales, with these rocks and trees, these shrubs and flowers, while they afford every desirable form and aspect of ground for sepulture, are, in the highest degree, adapted to attract the affections and to produce strong and tender attachments.

Shall we doubt then, for a moment, that these pre-eminent natural advantages will receive all the improvement from art and labor, which true taste and a liberal spirit can give? Few, I trust, of those philosophers are to be found among us, who are wise above the wisest, affecting to regard as of no consequence what becomes of the body after death. Not so the voice of nature and of God within us. Sacred are the remains of the dead among all people. Touch but a single grave with a sacrilegious

hand, and you rouse a feeling of popular indignation scarcely less intense, than if a murder were committed. Such is the feeling whose germ is implanted in us by our creator, not for the sake of the dead, not for the perishing body, but for the living soul—its peace, its comfort, its eternal welfare. The living soul receives a solace from the respect shown to the remains of deceased friends, and is strengthened in all its holiest aspirations and purposes by its sympathies for the dead. Can you imagine a worthier object than the one before us for the appropriation of some portion of our earthly treasures? Recollect the father of the faithful, who poured out his silver like water to obtain a decent burial place for his dead. Recollect the patriarch Joseph, who, by the munificent funeral of his father, showed that golden dust is not too precious to mingle with that of revered friends. Think of Joseph of Arimathea, whose new sepulchre, hewn out of a rock, was to him the most precious of all his possessions. Think, too, of the example of him, who so signally consecrated this memorable sepulchre, and took from death its sting, and who commended the expense of the very precious ointment poured upon his head, because it was done for his burial.

No, there will be no want among us of a liberal spirit for an object like this. Nor will taste fail, in due time, to accomplish her purposes; advancing in her work, till these fields, these hills and vales, exhibit in fullness the combined beauties of nature and art; gradually and slowly it may be, but still advancing, like the ivy which is to clothe in verdure yonder arch of entrance, and which, though at first sup-

ported by the wall to which it clings, will flourish and prevail till it covers the whole arch, imparting to it strength as well as ornament and beauty.

The completion of this beautiful cemetery will form a marked era in the history of our city, to which future generations will recur with emotions of grateful delight. Its benefits will not only be ceaseless, but constantly extending with its moral associations and its natural beauties, and with the number and intelligence of the people who enjoy them. The city will here find all needed accommodations for interment, while her ancient burial grounds, associated as they are with all that is most dear and venerable in the memory of the past, having fulfilled their appropriate office, will become objects of taste as well as reverence, greeting the eye with the pleasing aspect of foliage and flowers, while they impress the heart with solemn and tender recollections. Particular families will here select their favorite spots, around which will gather their most affecting associations connected with departed friends; associations deepened and refined by the whole influence of the place. When these selected spots shall have become hallowed by the remains of the loved and the revered, HARMONY GROVE will possess all the attributes of moral power as well as of natural beauty, to render it a most attractive resting place for the dead, and one of inappreciable value to the living.

The view of such a resting place, with such associations and attractions, is always pleasing to the mind, as well as to the sight, and sheds a propitious influence over the thoughts and feelings connected with our departure from life. Amid infinitely weigh-

tier considerations, it has its effect, to cheer and brighten the pathway to the skies. It softens the grim visage of death, strips the grave of some of its gloomiest associations, and sweetens the reflections of a dying pillow. To the sons and daughters of affliction, and such in our turn we all are, its consoling influences are unspeakably precious. It serves to assuage the anguish of recent bereavement, to soothe the poignancy of grief, and to restore, in the kindest and gentlest manner, peace and cheerfulness to the mourner's bosom. Sometimes, indeed, it seems almost to restore the lost treasures of the heart, by bringing them home to us with such vivid impressions, such tender recollections and delightful emotions.

But there is yet a higher value, which this rural cemetery will possess to every class and description of persons, in its influences upon their social affections, their virtues, and indeed their whole character. We are not apt to appreciate fully the effect of incidental instruction, compared with that which is direct and formal. The associations and feelings derived from the accidental impression of external things, especially things instinct with all that is inspiring, have a powerful influence both upon national and individual character. "Among the Greeks," says a French author,* "wherever the eyes were cast, there monuments of glory were to be found. The streets, the temples, the galleries, the porticos, all gave lessons to the citizens." Hence, their love of glory and of the arts. The lessons to be given here, in these sacred groves, promotive as they may be of taste for the arts, as well as for nature, will be

* Thomas.

essentially conducive to moral refinement and spiritual culture, and, consequently, to the moral power of man and of society. What is there of higher value than this? How worthless, compared with this, is mere wealth, with all its luxury and all its splendor? Without this, wealth itself cannot be safely possessed, far less, can it be rightly used and truly enjoyed. Moral power, indeed, is the great agent of human happiness, in every state and period of the soul's existence.

Who that passes his youth in the country ever forgets the lessons derived from the churchyard of his native village? The "sermons in stones," which he reads there, abide with him, while those from the pulpit, perhaps, will escape him forever. Nor is the instruction he receives confined to the teachings from stone or marble. The humblest grave is itself a monument to human frailty, impressing upon every beholder a lesson of religious wisdom.

"A heap of dust alone remains of thee ;

" 'Tis all *THOU* art, and all the *PROUD* shall be !"

It has been truly said by a late eloquent philosopher,* "that the parental virtues are not more a source of happiness to the child, than they are a source of moral inspiration." Among the monuments to the dead, may be contemplated the virtues of the fathers under circumstances which give the fullest effect to their moral inspiration. The mind is softened by its meditations, and made susceptible of deep and enduring impressions. And when to the affecting lesson, here so powerfully enforced, that it is appointed to men once to die, is added the solemn

* Brown.

thought, that it is appointed to them *but* once to live, how infinitely important it appears, that this one, this only life on earth, should be a life of virtue ! The ingenuous, contemplative youth, smitten with the admiration of virtue, is ready to exclaim, with Alcides,

“ I am thine, O propitious power, thy way
Teach me, possess my soul, be thou my guide,
From thee, O never, never let me stray.”*

A true poet of New England, of the last age, in a prospective view of the grave of WASHINGTON, has well described the feeling with which the lover of virtue visits the mansions of the dead, to trace memorials of lamented excellence.

“ When thou, as musing Tully paused and wept,
Where Syracuse and Archimedes slept,
With solemn sorrow and with pilgrim feet,
Shalt trace the shades of Vernon’s still retreat,
And, as the votive marble’s faithful page
Inscribes to fame the saviour of his age,
Shalt dew the knee-worn turf with streaming eyes,
Where, urned in dust, the mighty Fabius lies.”†

No Washington may ever again arise to bless our country by his life, or to hallow any portion of her soil in death. But, when time shall have gathered future harvests from the fields of humanity, shocks of corn fully ripe, with tender flowers and olive plants, to ripen in purer skies, and this consecrated grove shall have become a home of the departed, a city of the dead, here will be found those who emu-

* Spence’s *Polymetis*, 161.

† Works of R. T. Paine, 190.

lated the virtues and possessed the spirit of Washington, the benefactors and the ornaments of their race. Wisdom and goodness, genius, learning and piety will here be "urned in dust," and awaken feelings of admiration and reverence, while lovely infancy, blooming youth and beauty, call forth the tear of sympathy and regret. The "musing pilgrim" will here meet many a "votive marble," or storied granite, to attract his eye by its gracefulness, and to impress his heart by its touching memorials. Sometimes he, too, will "pause and weep." Kindling thoughts of human excellence and loveliness will mingle with his meditations, and imprint themselves upon his memory. He will return to the busy haunts of men with purer sympathies and desires, and more susceptible to all that is good and beautiful.

Who that delights to wander here will not find his heart moved, his best feelings awakened, his love of nature excited as well as gratified, his taste exercised if not refined, and his sentiments and views elevated? Who that often seeks to breathe into his soul the pure and holy influences here imparted to him, will fail to find that his principles grow firmer, his affections more kindly, his manners more gentle, his motives purer and more benevolent, and his aspirations more heavenly? And who, if he could, would wish to resist the combined attractions of nature and art, of taste and sentiment, drawing him to this "still retreat"? Thousands, from all the various walks of society, will yield to these attractions with animated delight. The aged, the youthful, the studious and the active, the grave and the gay, men of business

and persons of leisure, will throng these verdant walks and avenues, each at his favorite season ; but, whether it be in the freshness of the morning, or under the mid-day sun, at the calm hour of evening, or by the moon's mild light ; or from whatever motives they may come, whether to enjoy the beauties of natural scenery, or to view the embellishments of taste and works of art, or whether, "by lonely contemplation led," they come to meditate serious thoughts, or to weep over some loved one's grave tears such as Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus ; all, all will breathe the holy atmosphere of the place, and be subject to its inspiring associations.

Such, my friends, we confidently trust, will be the sacred character of HARMONY GROVE, and such the blessed effects of its moral power ; a power, which will increase with every accession from the living of the virtuous dead. And thus, the city of the living and the city of the dead will, by their mutual contribution, exalt each other ; the latter conducing to those virtues in life, which in death become its own treasures, adding to its moral dignity, and extending its propitious influence.

With the views we have here contemplated, the earnest prayers we have here offered to heaven, and the voice of solemn melody which has echoed so fervently through these shades, we now consecrate these grounds to the sacred uses of a Rural Cemetery. Separating them from the ordinary uses of the world, we consecrate them forever to the repose and sanctity of the dead. Let nothing enter here that defileth or worketh abomination ; let no profanation be uttered, no pollution breathed upon these

consecrated grounds. Let the foliage of these trees wave, the flowers here bloom, and the happy birds sing, unmolested ; and let the breezes of heaven waft the sweet fragrance of these groves in unmingled purity and freshness. Henceforth, the place whereon we stand is holy ground, and let every wanderer here feel, with the awakened patriarch at Bethel, that the Lord is surely in this place, and that this is the gate of Heaven.

Once more, we consecrate these grounds, with all their treasures of rural beauty, with all their hallowed associations, to the comfort, the enjoyment, and the moral well being of the living ; to the solace of grief, to the tears of sympathy and affection ; to the cause of piety and virtue ; to the protection of innocence, to the growth of wisdom, to the culture of all the social and christian graces.

Finally, we dedicate these precious possessions to the guardian care of that all-gracious Being, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and surely not a mortal returns to the dust, beseeching him that the same watchful Providence, which has guarded these lands from the beginning, may keep them forever sacred to the dead, and bless them, in all their ennobling uses, to the living.

My friends, before we retire from these delightful and now hallowed scenes, let us bestow a single reflection upon our personal interest in the solemn transactions of this hour. Yonder sun will soon cease to greet these eyes with his beams ; after a few more revolutions in his course, he will shine for us only upon our graves, to guide some sympathizing friend, or some curious stranger, to the spot where

we lie. That spot, as we humbly trust, will be found in this sacred and peaceful retirement, where affection may gather around it her favorite plants and flowers, and indulge her tears in all the beauty and stillness of nature. The contemplation is pleasing even in view of our own death. But let us remember, that our spirits return unto God who gave them ; and let the sublime thought awaken us to renewed ardor and diligence in the service of our maker, in the discharge of duty, in the offices of humanity and benevolence ; thus redeeming the time, that when these frail bodies shall be borne hither, to mingle with kindred dust, our immortal spirits, ascending to the Father, and sanctified through His truth in Jesus, may be admitted to dwell forever in that building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.







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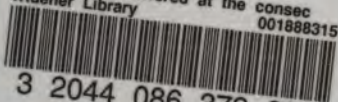
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